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CLERICAL REFORMISM -- AN APOLOGIA FOR
CAPITALISM

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CLERICAL REFORMISM -- AN APOLOGIA FOR
CAPITALISM

Following is the translation of an article entitled "Apologetika kapitalizma pod flagom klerikal'nogo 'reformatorstva'" (English version above) by I. Kichanova in the Russian language periodical Kommunist Ukrainy (Communist of the Ukraine), No 9, Kiev, September 1960, pages 49-57.

Today, when socialism's grandiose achievements are demonstrating to the world the incomparable superiority of socialism over capitalism, apologists for the bourgeoisie have decided no longer to defend openly the system of hired slavery so hated by the workers. In their blind fear of the rapid growth of the workers' sympathy for socialism and of popular revolutionary consciousness, capitalist apologists resort to deceit in attempting to disseminate reactionary ideas. They are forced to lie and dodge; to falsify reality and distort facts. A favorite method of bourgeois propaganda is demagogic jabber about the "Communist threat" to the individual, "people's capitalism", and class harmony in the "free world." Bourgeois philosophers and sociologists, opportunists and revisionists are ardent propagandists of these false slogans.

Vatican prelates, the representatives of social Catholicism, vigorously defend capitalist slavery. These "servants of God" would conceal the infamy of capitalism under religious dogma and quotes from "Scripture"; they try to hypnotize the workers' revolutionary consciousness with chatter about the "middle road" of social development. Christian "social reformers" have hypocritically announced that they are for "neither capitalism nor Communism." They picture the situation as though there existed a third path of social development differing from both capitalism and Communism. "Neither capitalism nor Marxian socialism can create the true community which forms the basis of society," asserts G. Moody. "Only the return to Christianity can solve this dilemma. Justice, tolerance, and community spirit must guide the national economy. Only a combi-

nation of Christian ethics with technology can create genuine economic progress." /See Note 17 This is a typical formulation of essential clerical teaching on the "third road".

(/Note 17 G. Moody, Church and Society, (New York, 1953), page 547.)

The "third road", therefore, means the establishment of direct control by the Church in all areas of social life and the revival of medieval obscurantism. M. Fogarty, the author of another voluminous work on this subject, Christian Democracy in Western Europe, attempts to prove that the Catholic Church, with its flexible political and social teachings and tremendous power, is the most consolidated force in modern society. How do the ideologists and politicians of the "middle road" solve the problems of current social development? Do they demand the abolition of private property and the elimination of inequality of ownership? Does Christian ideology advocate the political equality of all citizens, does it guarantee the social rights of the individual in its "ideal" corporative system?

Property in the "Third Road" Doctrine of Social Development.

The policy and propaganda of modern clerical "social reformers" cannot ignore the anti-capitalist attitude of the masses. Posing as "friends of the workers", the clerical "reformers" constantly complain of capitalist selfishness, heartlessness, and abuse of the workers, but hasten to point out that such things are only a distortion of capitalism. The Church regards the principles of capitalism as sacred and ethical. As far back as 1891, Pope Leo XIII wrote: "Proceeding from the moral law, the social doctrine of the Church condemns the capitalist regime, but not capitalism itself, for the Church recognizes the lawfulness of hired labor and profits. The Church condemns only the organization and methods of capitalism". The present pope, John XXIII, has reiterated Leo XIII's stand. In his first encyclical he stated that "capitalism in itself is not evil" and then pronounced the traditional anathema against "pernicious" Communism. This is the basic position of the "middle road" reformers. It permits clericals to denounce and criticize capitalists for their forgetfulness of Christian commandments as much as they like without threatening the foundations of private property and exploitation. "Although the Christian reformer fights against the

arbitrariness and selfishness of powerful capitalists, he realizes that property, i.e., the necessary material possessions of the individual, is a guarantee of the freedom and dignity of the individual and a stimulant to progress," writes the Jesuit magazine Civiltà Cattolica.

All bourgeois ideologists agree that private property is a guarantee of the freedom and dignity of man. The trouble is that under capitalism only a tiny minority of exploiters own property. Since the masses of the proletariat are denied property, their fate is not freedom, but capitalist slavery. The clericals should admit the proletariat's lack of rights in capitalist society and summon all workers deprived of property (and, therefore, of freedom and dignity) to struggle against the power of the monopolies, against the foundations of capitalism. However, they urge the workers to attain freedom and dignity not by expropriating the capitalists, but by "uniting" with them through the acquisition of a few shares of capitalist property. The program of the Jesuit Noll Breuning, which has been published in West-German trade-union weeklies, calls for "the formation of property in the hands of the workers." Breuning declares that "the redistribution of existing property would not lead to any positive goal." He has invented a truly Jesuitical explanation of this statement: "From a moral, cultural, and political point of view, belated enrichment will never have the same significance for recipients of charity that property has for the real owner. In this case the truth that 'property received as a gift is not property at all' would be borne out completely."

How is it possible to proclaim "property for all" without affecting the foundations of capitalism? West-German Christian Democrats answer that all workers can become property-owners by the purchase of stocks with their wages. The advocates of "property for all" are well aware that the owners of a few shares can never hope to compete with the millionaire who has controlling interest. The clericals consider this situation normal and attempt to buttress it with theoretical arguments. In his book, Catholic Social Teaching (Freiburg, 1956), Jakob Fellermeier states that the worker produces nothing new by his labor, whereas the capitalist creates new values. Since the capitalist produces in his own name and at his own expense, his vocation is more elevated. For this reason, according to Catholic teaching, both unequal

wages and unequal property are lawful. Though workers do not have such honorable and high functions as capitalists, Catholic "social reformers" have such great Christian charity that they are willing to "assist" the workers to create property.

West-German Economics Minister Erhard, a Jesuitical theorist, and Finance Minister Etzel describe more revealingly the nature of employee participation in capitalist profits. They demand that workers donate part of their wages for the needs of the capitalist enterprise. Etzel has stated that "an incorrectly understood need contains a danger." He thinks that employees should be persuaded, or, if necessary, forced, to economize for the sake of capitalist profits. Fellermeier supports Etzel: "The compulsory regulation of wages must not be dramatized; compulsory benefits are better than none."

This is what is meant by "property for all," by the "third road" to freedom and dignity under conditions of capitalist bondage. This is the program of the clerical "reformers," who pose as "friends of the workers," but in reality are Vatican apologists for the exploitation and oppression of the masses. Need and deprivation are the price the worker must pay for "happiness," for the "right" to own a few shares in the business where he works and where he can never have any power.

The "Supra-Class" Clerical State in the Service of Monopolists

The Church's claim to a dominant role in social life is expressed in Catholic doctrine on the state, which provides the theoretical basis for the policy of influential clerical parties in Spain, West Germany, France, Belgium, Austria, and other countries. The clericals uphold the corporate state as a supra-class organ capable of arbitrating social strife. All papal encyclicals on social problems contain demands for maintaining the Church's power in modern society, and propose the corporative system as the basis of Christian Democratic strategy and tactics. The clericals proceed from the papal doctrine that the Church is above the state; from this they deduce the necessary subordination of the state to the Church.

The Church's claims are extensive. Cardinal Ottaviani formulated them as follows: "If there is one indisputable truth among the general principles of the social law of the Gospels, it is the obligation of rulers in predominately Catholic states (which consequently should be governed by Catholics) to influence

legislation in a Catholic sense." Clericalism is, therefore, a new form of totalitarianism. It is gradually acquiring the tint of fascist ideology, and it would be incorrect to underestimate the danger of clerical pretensions in Western Europe and Latin America. Even the bourgeois press is concerned about this; Foreign Report, a newspaper published by the London Economist, in the issue of 21 January 1960 stated that Catholic "reformers" in Italy are endeavoring to establish a clerical-authoritarian regime similar to fascist corporativism. Comrades Thorez, Biyu, and Roshe /Last two names transliterated from Russian/ recently proposed a bill in defense of secular education against clerical reaction. They emphasized that reactionaries and monopolists want to award the Church a dominant role and important prerogatives in the state, and expressed their fear that not only secular education, but also the secular state were being threatened.

The programs and practices of the Christian Democratic parties give insight into the real meaning of clericalism. Prominent West-German Christian Democrats idealize the clerical state which they call the "social constitutional state." The frank avowal made by Bundestag Chairman Gerstenmeyer at the convention of the Christian Democratic Union in September 1958 gives an idea of this state's nature: "Despite all its achievements, our social state will not undertake to guarantee the social existence of individual citizens or groups ... In the social constitutional state the individual must assume the risk of preserving his life and existence." As even Catholic politicians are forced to admit, the individual under conditions of capitalist competition is alone and helpless against hostile social forces and unprotected against ruin. "The 'social constitutional state' is obviously a fiction. Nevertheless, even it is suspected by some clericals. The Industrie-Kurier, the newspaper of big business, wrote on 25 September 1958 that the Christian Democratic Union would soon "purge" its vocabulary of socialist terms like "social constitutional state."

The Christian Democrats hold absolute power in the "social constitutional state." Statistics on the social composition of the CDU-CSU deputies to the Bundestag reveal in whose name the Christian politicians govern: there are nineteen landowners (including Prince von Bismarck, Count Adelman, Baron von Guttenberg, and Baron von Manteufel), fourteen presidents of concerns, numerous lawyers and other representatives of the bourgeoisie, but only two deputies who directly participated

in production (cf. Bonner Korrespondent, 31 August and 7 September 1959).

The Clerical Program for the Settlement of Social Conflicts within the Framework of Capitalism

The reconciliation of capitalist and worker was and is the most important function of clerical policy and ideology. Because of the growth of proletarian class consciousness and activity, the old exhortations to humility, patience, and obedience to the powers that be no longer suffice. Concrete and effective measures are needed to hypnotize the workers and undermine their struggle against capitalist exploitation. The clericals have created numerous workers' organizations for this purpose. Class peace based on Christian solidarity is the Catholic ideal. Christian solidarism /sic/ means the establishment of political and economic "equilibrium" by assigning individuals and groups to estates within the corporative system. "The state governs in the name of the common good and is necessary; Catholic solidarism would consolidate all elements of society on a cooperative basis by dividing society into corporations." /See Note 1/ Obeying the commands of the bourgeoisie, Christian "socialists" attempt to save and strengthen the capitalist system by their advocacy of cooperation among all social strata. They have more zeal than reason, for they want nothing less than the reconciliation of workers to perpetual capitalist exploitation. Contemporary Christian "reformers" are not original in their attempts to achieve class harmony. Even Pope Pius XI proposed to "group people not by the position they occupy in the labor market, but by the various branches of activity." A letter of 5 July 1929 to the Congregation of the Holy Office appealed to Catholics to join special trade unions, which "reject in principle the class struggle and all kinds of collectivism, and which have the establishment of peaceful relations between capital and labor as their objective."

/See Note 2/

(/Note 1/ G. Moody, Church and Society, (New York, 1953), page 517.)

(/Note 2/ Cahiers du communisme, 1959, page 997.)

The clericals use every means to influence the psychology of the workers. An article entitled "The Psychology of Workers and Employers" in the March 1959 issue of a French Catholic magazine suggested the improvement of worker-employer relations by increasing the worker's interest in his job and eliminating his distrust

of and hostility to the employer. The article also proposed the formation of joint discussion groups, common sports, common lunch rooms, etc. It recommended meetings between trade-union and Catholic organizations and the creation of parish clubs to bring together owners and workers. In short, it advocated the all-embracing ideological education of the workers, the inculcation of the idea that they are working not for the owner, but with the owner for the common good. The author of the article regrets that the results of this activity are still meager and points out the necessity of scientific study of the problem of co-operation. He urges clerical "social scientists" to devote themselves to this task.

West Germany is especially interested in the elaboration and application of the theory of solidarism, for the clerical West-German state is a prime example of solidarism in practice. The Arbeiter-Zeitung disclosed recently that the Federal court for labor disputes had handed down a decision that the metal-workers' union had to compensate the owners for losses incurred during a strike in I.G. Metall plants. Here, as in other cases, the federal court defended the interests of capital against the workers. In his book, The Third Road?, Marxist scholar Rheingold establishes the identity of the Hitler labor law with current Adenauer labor legislation. The Christian Democratic clerical state has replaced Hitler Fascism as the guardian of capitalist interests.

The clerical concept of settling social strife is diametrically opposed to Marxist teaching on the class struggle. The purpose of the prescriptions the clericals are writing out for society is to subordinate the workers to the exploiters, to divert the masses from the Marxist class struggle, and to win them over to the conciliatory policy of the reformists and right-wing socialists. But the efforts of the Christian "socialists" and other defenders of capitalism are in vain. No one can succeed in reversing the course of history or repealing its inexorable laws. The revolutionary determination of the workers is growing day by day in all capitalist countries. They are seeking a way out of their predicament by fighting for the destruction of capitalism -- and they will attain their goal!

Anti-Communism

Although the clerical formula "neither capitalism

nor Communism" seemingly rejects both systems, its real content is militant anti-Communism. Bishop Danzhe /transliterated from Russian/ formulated the anti-Communist program of the Catholic Church in a speech at a conference of Catholic intellectuals in France in November 1955. He said that the Church "wants to baptize the working world, i.e., win the workers to its side after inducing them to renounce the Marxist interpretation of society."

In 1937 the encyclical Divini Redemptoris was dedicated to the struggle against Communism. It appeared during the period when the historical results of Soviet socialist construction were being summarized, when a program of further economic and cultural development was being planned, and when the attention of the entire world was riveted on the new Constitution of the USSR. In this encyclical religious obscurantists could no longer simply denounce Communism as the doctrine of the antichrist or as a "pestilence destroying the backbone of society." Pius XI warned against underestimating the economic might of the Soviet Union and expressed misgivings about the spread of Communist ideological influence.

Vice-President Nixon of the United States highly values the efforts of Pius XI. In a speech before the Catholic Youth Council in Philadelphia on 24 November 1957 he declared: "Pope Pius XI gave a remarkable example of historical prophecy twenty years ago, when he composed the encyclical On Atheistic Communism. Although at that time most people spoke of the Soviet Union as a weak and incompetent tyranny, this great religious leader emphatically referred to Communism as a great menace."

The successors of Pius XI have been occupying themselves with the further elaboration of anti-Communist strategy and tactics. These matters are discussed at the annual conferences of the International Union of Catholic Parties. In 1949 the "Holy See" excommunicated Communists and Communist sympathizers; in 1950 the governments of the people's democracies were condemned; and in 1956 a resolution was adopted against the system of bilateral agreements "with the Soviet bloc." Today every means at the disposal of clerical propaganda is being directed toward the promotion of a "crusade" against Communism. A circular distributed to priests by a French bishop states: "The priest can exert extremely effective influence on the social life of the people from the pulpit, in catechism lessons, the confessional, and religious clubs ...

He must utilize this influence to explain the difference between the workers' movement and Communist propaganda, and should warn his parishioners against the latter."

In their efforts to use clerical ideology as a barrier against the influence of Marxist ideas, Catholic obscurantists attempt to infiltrate all strata of society and to contrive anti-Communist arguments in conformity with existing conditions. Catholic ideologists are especially active in endeavoring to "refute" Communist theory. The leadership of this ideological struggle has been entrusted to the Jesuits, who have amassed considerable experience in combatting progress over the centuries. Their "arsenal" includes the most refined methods of lying, slander, falsification, sophistry, reference to "sacred" authorities, etc. They resort to base tricks to prove that Lenin contradicts Marx and Engels, and that Engels contradicts Marx.

Fear of defeat in open battle is driving the mortal enemies of Communism to pose as benevolent "interpreters" of Marxism. Their intention is to propagate distorted "versions" of Marxism by demonstrating that Communist Marxism is not true Marxism, but "Russian Bolshevism." The Jesuit Calvez says this openly: "The doctrine of Bolshevism is Marxist only in name." In this way the myth of "Marxism" without Leninism, without dialectical and historical materialism, is created. The erudite Catholic "interpreters" of Marxism use another device: they present Marxism as scientific, progressive, and humanist, but merely an "ordinary" world-view or philosophy, similar to many others. The Jesuit Jean Lacroix propounds this idea: "Marxism is neither more nor less legitimate than other outlooks on life." (See Note 1/ In Lacroix's opinion, socialism cannot solve the contradictions of capitalism, for these contradictions will be resolved only in the life after death.

(/Note 1/ Jean Lacroix, Marxisme Esistenzialisme, Personalisme, (Paris, 1955), page 9.)

Clerical theoretical arguments against Marxism only supplement vehement anti-Communist and anti-Soviet propaganda in mass publications -- newspapers, magazines, handbooks, and dictionaries. Because proletarian interest in the Soviet Union is increasing daily, Catholic propagandists try to poison the minds of the masses, to disseminate fables and crude lies about the Soviet Union. The "social reformers" who claim that their "third road" rejects capitalism as

well as Communism cannot endure objective argumentation and frequently resort to vulgar slander. All attempts to compromise the successes of the Soviet Union remain unconvincing and fall short of the mark. The workers rebuff clerical anti-Communism as merely another bourgeois slander of Marxism. Uneasy statements by Vatican prelates on the growing influence of Communist ideas among the masses are a frequent occurrence.

An address on "The Catholic Church as a Factor in the Struggle between Faith and Unbelief," delivered at a congress of the Catholic press in Vienna on 1 October 1957, mentioned the "danger" of Communist infiltration among the Catholic propagandists themselves. The speaker noted that "in the countries of Christian humanism" many journalists act like materialists and Marxists, while considering themselves opponents of Communism. Pius XI's lamentation that the greatest scandal of the twentieth century is the loss of the working masses to the Church is well known. This process continues because of the victories of the socialist countries in the world-wide competition with the capitalist system. The honorable and courageous struggle of the Soviet Union for peace is opening the eyes of an increasing number of people. "Khrushchev proposes complete disarmament and complete controls. No Christian could propose a better plan than that. This is what we have been praying for for many years." Those words of an Anglican deacon express the opinion of many believers.

When Catholic social theory is compared with Marxist theory and practice, the clericals, naturally, are routed. A militant enemy of Marxism, the American Catholic priest Remey (transliterated from Russian), summarized the results of the comparison in an article published in the magazine Vital Speeches: "Communism and Communists do not despise and segregate people because they are white, black, or yellow. This fact is extremely attractive to the peoples of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, who have been dominated and humiliated by Europeans for centuries. We, the Christians, of the United States and the western world, are far behind the Communists in the application of Christian principles, e.g., the equality of all men without regard to skin-color or race." He is compelled to admit that Communism really inspires the masses to great deeds, whereas Christian ideology is powerless in this respect. Remey proposes that the leaders of the United States restore their moral authority before it is too late; in foreign policy they should

seize the initiative from Communism. However, despairing of the revival of the power and influence of bourgeois ideology, this Christian considers a military crusade against Communism as the only solution.

Khrushchev had such "Christians" in mind when he said that many people conceal their anti-social criminality behind God's name, and that we will always fight against such people, expose their machinations, and point to the true roads of moral and spiritual liberation. Atheistic Communists consistently fight for the reduction of tension throughout the world and for the improvement of the workers' plight. In defending proletarian interests, they everywhere strive for unity in the struggle for peace and social progress. Maurice Thorez formulated this position in a speech in which he said: "We secularists extend our hands to you, the Catholic laborer, white-collar worker, artisan, and peasant, because you are our brother and are crushed by the same cares as we."

Despite the machinations of Catholic priests and politicians, the workers cannot be diverted from the struggle for their class interests. The activity of Catholic workers who collaborate with Communists in the defense of their political and economic rights is increasing steadily. The patience of capitalism's oppressed is coming to an end. In the eyes of the masses, the facts of life corroborate the truth of Marxist sociology and of Communist ideals. Khrushchev has emphasized in his speeches that Communists defend the interests of all workers -- of atheists and believers alike. Nikita Sergéyevich has shown convincingly that the bourgeoisie, who have made the workers' life into a hell on earth, utilize Christian slogans only to hide their dirty politics. The bourgeois leaders count in vain on the blindness of the masses. The historical triumph of Communist ideas is inevitable.